



Shasta County Farm Bureau

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August 17, 2000

Mr. Steve Ritchie, Acting Executive Director
Cal-Fed Bay-Delta Program
1416 Ninth St., Suite 1155
Sacramento, CA 95814

RECEIVED
AUG 21 2000
CALFED Bay-Delta Program

Re: Final Programmatic EIS/EIR

Dear Mr. Ritchie:

As President of Shasta County Farm Bureau representing over 1600 members, I feel it is important to address some of our concerns that are raised with the recent release of your final Cal-Fed EIS/EIR. I am disturbed about how Cal-Fed programs will affect the environment and vitality on farms and ranches not only throughout the state, but also those located within Shasta County.

Presently, Cal-Fed does not address the issue of point of origin labeling. Water stored needs to be readily available to the farmers and ranchers within the area it originates in. Shasta County farmers recognize that we are fortunate to have an abundant supply of water that can be shared, but measures need to be taken to ensure that our farmers will have use of the water that is rightfully theirs in times of need.

In addition, there needs to be an emphasis on surface water storage. Raising the Shasta Dam is not going to alleviate the problem of storing accessible water for those in the San Joaquin Valley. The only way to guarantee adequate water supplies during drought is to capture more of the high flows during wet winters, especially in aboveground reservoirs. Otherwise, water will be taken away from farms to sustain environmental and urban uses during droughts.

Because of these, and many other impacts on the environment of rural California, and that the Cal-Fed plan appears to have changed as a result of the "framework agreement" signed in June, we need more time to evaluate the new environmental report.

I ask two things of you. First extend the period to look through the document and provide comments on the final EIS/EIR released on July 21. With thousands of pages to look through, there is just not enough time. In addition, hold public hearings to explain what you will do and how this will effect the California population. Many changes were made to the report, which the public needs to have an opportunity to understand and address. I fear that even after we review the document there will be a lot that we won't understand. Even though you may not feel obligated to tell us how the plan will affect us, it's the right thing to do.

Farmers recognize and support the need to use water more efficiently. As a result our farms have increased tonnage of agricultural production by two-thirds since 1967, while using less water. In fact, California leads the nation in production Agriculture. However, conservation has environmental consequences of its own. Cal-Fed has not done enough to study the environmental impact of this large-scale land conversion. Therefore, Cal-Fed should not finalize its plan until citizens have adequate opportunity to review the policy and make an informed decision on how it will affect their future.

Sincerely,



Kurt Urricelqui
President, Shasta County Farm Bureau

cc:	Senator Dianne Feinstein	County Supervisor Hawes
	Senator Barbara Boxer	County Supervisor Fust
	Rep. Wally Herger	County Supervisor Clarke
	Governor Gray Davis	County Supervisor Wilson
	State Senator Maurice Johannesen	County Supervisor Kehoe
	State Assembly Dick Dickerson	